

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 00180 101510Z

42

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5598

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 0180

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: ANGOLA/MPLA/CUBAN TRANSIT VIA AZORES

REF: (A) STATE 006141, (B) LISBON 176, (C) LISBON 154
(D) LISBON 142, (E) LISBON 129, (F) LISBON 122,
(G) LISBON 091, (H) LISBON 076, (I) LISBON 010

1. THERE ARE THREE ASPECTS TO CURRENT GOP POSITION ON ANGOLA.

(A) CUBAN TRANSIT VIA AZORES: AS DEPT AWARE, I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH PRIME MINISTER (REF D); SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER MARIO SOARES (REF B); DCM HAS MADE DEMARCHE TO FONMIN MELO ANTUNES (REF I); PORTUGUESE MILITARY WERE ALSO ALERTED (REF F). WE KNOW SOARES HAS RAISED MATTER WITH PRIME MINISTER AND THAT LATTER HAS DISCUSSED WITH PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES (REF B). TO BEST OF EMBASSY KNOWLEDGE, GOP HAS PUT STOP TO CUBAN USE OF AZORES AS RESULT OF OUR VARIOUS APPROACHES. EMBASSY IS NOT AWARE OF ANY CUBAN FLIGHT VIA AZORES SINCE LAST DECEMBER. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT CONFIRMING THIS POINT, OR CORRECTING US ON IT. RECENT CUBAN FLIGHTS HAVE BYPASSED AZORES FOR STOP IN CAPE VERDE (PONTA DELGADA 0002, REF D). STATEMENT BY FONMIN PRESS SPOKESMAN (REF C), IN EMBASSY VIEW, REPRESENTED STANDARD BUREAUCRATIC ATTEMPT AT EX-POST FACTO RATIONALIZATION OF PAST OCCURRENCE, WITH NO SUGGESTION THAT FUTURE FLIGHTS VIA AZORES WOULD BE PERMITTED. IN VIEW OF HIGHEST-LEVEL ASSURANCES I HAVE RECEIVED AND DEMONSTRATED FOLLOW-UP TO OUR DEMARCHES, I DOUBT THEY WILL BE. IN THIS CONNECTION, FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE OF TODAY'S (JAN 10) "EXPRESSO" READS "AMERICAN PRESSURE STOPPED CUBAN
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FLIGHTS VIA SANTA MARIA." ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE CONSISTS OF

FACTUAL TREATMENT OF ISSUE. A FOREIGN OFFICE DEMARCHE ON A CYA PRESS STATEMENT THAT NOBODY BELIEVES INVOLVING A PROBLEM WHICH HAS NOW BEEN RESOLVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE THE BEST USE OF OUR RESOURCES.

(B) RECOGNITION OF MPLA: AS DEPT AWARE I HAVE JUST MADE POINTS CONTAINED IN REFTEL (A) TO PRIME MINISTER (REFTEL D) AND MARIO SOARES (REFTEL B). BOTH SEE THINGS OUR WAY. (WE HAVE REINFORCED USG VIEWS WITH OTHER KEY PARTY AND GOP FIGURES AS WELL OVER PAST WEEK.) KEY PROBLEM FOR THEM -- AS INDEED IT IS FOR MELO ANTUNES -- IS HOW THEY PERCEIVE USG POSTURE IN LIGHT OF CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES. WE HAVE CONVEYED PRESIDENT'S AND SECRETARY'S DETERMINATION TO THEM, BUT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT THESE ARGUMENTS WILL BE FULLY PERSUASIVE IN LIGHT OF CONTINUING US PRESS SPECULATION ON CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE DIFFERENCES. IT MIGHT HELP WITH AZEVEDO IF WE WOULD GIVE HIM THE SPECIFIC ASSURANCE HE REQUESTED (REFTEL D). DEPT MAY ALSO WISH TO CONSIDER PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY. I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING AS SOON AS FEASIBLE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF OAU SUMMIT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR USG POLICY.

(C) FOOD SUPPLIES FOR LUANDA: AS DEPT AWARE FROM EMBASSY AND PRESS REPORTING, SOME FOOD IS BEING SENT FROM LISBON TO LUANDA VIA REGULAR TAP FLIGHTS. EMBASSY WAS INFORMED BY RELIABLE SOURCE THAT MINISTER VICTOR CRESPO IS BEHIND THIS OPERATION. EMBASSY IS QUIETLY INFORMING FRIENDLY PORTUGUESE JOURNALISTS TO FINGER CRESPO ALONG LINES OF "FOOD FOR MPLA WHILE BREADLINES FORM IN LISBON, ETC."

2. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) WOULD APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS ON OUR RESPONSE TO PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST FOR ASSURANCES THAT WE WILL GIVE HIM ADVANCE WARNING IF WE INTEND TO CHANGE OUR POSITION ON ANGOLA (REFTEL D). (B) WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION DEPT MAY HAVE ABOUT CUBAN FLIGHTS THROUGH THE AZORES SINCE DECEMBER, AND USE BY CUBANS OF CAPE VERDE AIRPORT. IN MEANTIME WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS ALL PERTINENT ASPECTS OF ANGOLA ISSUE IN ALL FORUMS.
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NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O - MR. TANNER.

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